

transmitting at least a portion of the end user request to the first expert;
receiving the expert answer responsive to the end user request; the expert answer
containing information about the second expert; and
transmitting the expert answer to the end user.

186. The method of claim 185, further comprising:
guaranteeing payment to the first expert.

187. The method of claim 186, in which the step of guaranteeing payment comprises:
requiring the end user to prepay.

188. The method of claim 186, in which the step of guaranteeing payment comprises:
checking a credit card account.

189. The method of claim 188, in which the step of checking a credit card account is
performed before the step of transmitting at least a portion of the end user request to the first
expert.

190. The method of claim 188, further comprising:
establishing a price for the expert answer corresponding to the end user request; and
if credit available on the credit card account is less than the price of the expert answer,
requesting that the end user provide a credit card number of another credit card account.--

REMARKS

Claims presented for prosecution in this Preliminary Amendment are 1, 67, 113
and 177 - 190. Claims 2 - 18 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims
177 - 190 have been added in order to distinctly claim the invention. No new matter has been
added. Claims 1, 67, 113 and 177, 178, 179 and 185 are independent.

The present application is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application No.
08/685,706 which was allowed on March 26, 1998. Copies of independent claims 1, 67 and 113
were allowed in the parent case of the present application and have been amended herein.

Independent claims 1 and 67 have been amended to further include, among other things, terminology reciting that each expert qualification corresponds to an expert of a plurality of experts.

Independent claim 67 has been amended so that, among other things, the end user request is transmitted to an expert. The term "expert address" was previously used to denote the destination of transmissions.

Independent claims 1 and 113 have been amended to further include, among other things, terminology reciting means for searching to identify an expert and an address corresponding to the identified expert.

Accordingly, amended claims 1, 67 and 113 are deemed allowable.

Newly-added claims 177-190 are directed to the approval of a first expert by one or more experts with higher qualifications. Support for claims 177-190 may be found, for example, on page 38 of the present application.


If the Examiner has any suggestions for expediting allowance of the present application, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Please charge any fees which may be required for this Amendment, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0271. If an extension of time is required, or if an additional extension of time is required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, please grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this Response timely, and please charge any fee for such extension to Deposit Account No. 50-0271.

Respectfully submitted,

November 12, 1998

Date



Dean P. Alderucci
Registration No. 40,484
Walker Digital Corporation
Intellectual Property Department
Five High Ridge Park
Stamford, CT 06905-1325
Telephone: (203) 705-3006
Facsimile (203) 595-8266